

## RURAL FREE DELIVERY.

Its Future Development Depends on the Equitable Solution of the Road Problem.

The remarkable growth of the rural free mail delivery system, and the willingness of congress to appropriate money for extensions faster than the extensions can be made, have been surprising even to the most enthusiastic friends of the system. "Why, the thing is spreading like wildfire," remarked a gentleman who had been reading up on the subject. "At this rate rural free mail delivery will be universal in a few years." At first glance this view appears to be correct, but in fact such a view is merely superficial. It takes no great amount of investigation to convince one that the system must meet and overcome very great obstacles before it can even become general, to say nothing of being universal. So far the system has sailed on smooth and open seas with favorable winds. But now it is rapidly approaching a region of rocks and snags and storms.

Dropping the maritime figure and coming back to terra firma, the great obstacle to the general spread of the rural free delivery system is the miserable roads of the country. So far the system has only been extended to communities blessed with good roads. Among the many communities demanding the introduction of the system the post office department has been able to select those which have good roads, either as a result of favorable natural condition or superior wealth. The less favored communities, which have been passed by, have consoled themselves with the thought that their turn would come soon. But when these disappointed communities—and their number is increasing very rapidly—find out that they are permanently barred from enjoying the benefits of free delivery on account of the condition of their roads, a cry of indignant opposition will be raised, and it will grow into an angry roar above which it is doubtful if the friends of free delivery can be heard. When this storm breaks the beneficiaries of the system will be found to be a small minority and the disappointed a large majority of the rural population. Suppose the minority stands on its dignity and says: "What are you going to do about it?" What is to prevent the disappointed majority from wiping out the whole system and thus restoring equality before the law? Or suppose the minority says: "Why don't you improve your roads, and thus secure the blessings of free mail delivery?" The majority can answer: "In improving our roads we have to overcome greater obstacles, and our means are less. Why not help us improve our roads through general taxation?" Such a demand as this is almost certain to result from the agitation for rural free delivery of the mails. And what is there unreasonable or unjust about such a demand? The general improvement of the roads of the country is a work too stupendous to be left entirely to the small municipalities. Besides, it is not more deserving of national aid than the building of railroads and canals and the improvement of rivers and harbors.

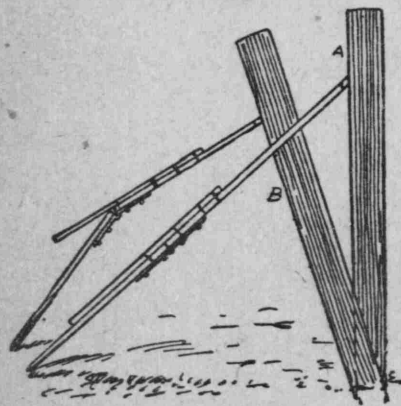
A proper distribution of the expenses of general road improvement among the nation, the states and the local communities appears to be the only practical solution of the road problem, and the road problem must be solved if rural free mail delivery is to be made general.

## BRACING FENCE POSTS.

A Homemade Implement Which Does the Work as Well as Those Sold in Shops.

Take a 2-inch plank 4 feet long, 6 inches wide, rip it diagonally into two pieces, 2x2 inches at one end, 2x4 inches at the other. Butt the 4-inch ends together and connect them with a pair of heavy strap hinges.

Cut another piece 4 feet long for a lever and bolt it on as shown in cut. The upper end of the machine should



FENCE POST STRAIGHTENER.

have a ferrule and sharpened spike, to prevent splitting and slipping. The bottom end will need a foot to prevent sinking in the ground.

To operate, place against leaning post (b), and press down on lever. Two bites are often necessary if the post leans badly. When the post is plumb, as at (a), the machine will hold it in place for tamping.—S. B. Lawrence, in Farm and Home.

## The Best Farmer Defined.

The best farmer is not always the one who derives the most profit from a farm. Happening to grow certain crops that failed to grow elsewhere, or a chance rise in the price of some product, may result favorably to anyone who is so situated as to take advantage of opportunities. A good farmer keeps his house and grounds in perfect order, weeds are not allowed to grow in his farm, he uses the best broods of animals and the most productive varieties of plants, while the farm is not allowed to depreciate in fertility.

## ON THE HILLTOPS.

BY JULIETTE B. M'CEARLEY.

Charline sat on the hilltops and looked down on the town. There was not much to see there—crooked, muddy streets, about a half dozen small stores, a few pretty cottages, and a great many more ugly ones, a tumble-down church, and a new, white schoolhouse that looked altogether too modern for its surroundings; it seemed a waste of time to the uninitiated to climb the hills, and look down at this town, when one could stay so much more comfortably in one's house and look up on the hills.

But when one looked over the town—ah, then there was a feeling of freedom from the ugly everyday things of life, for the hills were tall and green and mysterious—huge heaps thrown up by some mighty convulsion of nature long ago. Here and there groups of stately cedars, spiked with amber tips or laden with bluish-green berries, delighted the weary eyes, and far away beyond the low, muddy bar, where the cotton stalks stood, brown and ugly and lopsided, the river lay, a broad gleam of purple water now sparkling in golden sunlight—sometimes only marked by a wall of silvery white mist.

Charline loved to look at the river and the hills. In all her young life they had taught her more than she had learned in the rickety old church which perched high and forlornly on the side of a caving bank, with yellow-splashed walls, on which generations of bad boys had scribbled, and where a minister, the man she had promised to marry, came once a month to rant about the flames of hell which were always ready to swallow up the ungodly who danced and laughed and made merry.

Charline shuddered as she thought of him, but he was only a man, and what were men after all? Men had built the little town yonder, and God had made the hills—the beautiful, useless hills, and the beautiful, useless daisies, which grew in patches on the hillsides and smiled up at one like baby eyes. Yet, the preacher had said only last Sunday that useless beauty and outward adornment were "marks of the beast," and bade the women cast off their rings and trinkets. No rings shone on Charline's brown hands. One would be there soon enough, she thought, which would mean almost servitude to her, and yet when she looked at it, it would also whisper to her of a sacrifice for love which would help her to bear it, for she could never hope then to sail away on the broad river to the world of which she had dreamed. She could never again close her eyes beneath the cedars in the rapture of love's embrace.

It had been autumn then, and the valley between the hills had lain like a yellow ribbon and the grass was soft and dead, and the hills had risen north and south, mantled with purpling grapes and wreathed with the soft mist of Indian summer. Only at sunset the mist had cleared away, and there had been roses in the sky, and roses on her soft brown cheeks, as he had come lightly over the dead grass, and awakened her soul with his kiss. She knew now it was only an idle dream, and that he had kissed her—not because he loved her, but because he held her lightly, and that the pastime of an idle hour had separated him from the woman he loved—the rich, fair, kindly girl who had always seemed like some princess to Charline. But she would show them how cruel the gossips had been; it should not cost him dear, even though now he sought her side no more. All her womanhood in pride cried out to her to show him that she did not care. All the woman's tenderness pleaded to protect him from the consequences of his folly. As she sat in the shade of the cedars, and looked down at the town she saw a woman, tall and slender, going along the path his feet had once touched so lightly when he had seen her on the hillside. She drew her breath a little hard as she caught the sheen of the pale blonde hair. The blonde woman started as she saw her sitting there, and would have passed with a dignified bow, but the girl called her name, and with innate courtesy she paused.

"A beautiful evening, is it not?" she said, in her soft, clear voice. "I came up to see the sunset on the river, and you seem to be enjoying it, too. Do you come often?"

The next moment, as she remembered what the village gossips had said of her lover and Charline trysting here, she could have bitten her tongue for the question. "Yes," she said, with a little catch in her voice, "I have come often during the past few weeks. I am to be married soon—to the minister—perhaps you may not have heard—and after that I shall not be here often, for I shall be out behind the hills, where I cannot even hear a boat whistle. I think I will miss that."

The two women—the small brown girl in the grass, with the rich, velvety eyes, and the blonde woman who had grace rather than beauty—looked in each other's faces, and she of the blonde hair drew a deep breath.

Then she spoke with a cold, slow smile: "But you will have your husband," she said; "it will be a great thing for you to be married to a clergyman. Young girls always make heroes of them, I believe."

"Yes," said Charline, and a bright red spot burned on her cheeks and crimsoned the lips that spoke so bravely and falsely. "I always admired him, and I shall read his sermons, and hear him preach, and I am sure—oh, quite sure—that I shall be happy. No one else ever cared for me or kissed me or told me he loved me, and I should hate to be an old maid. My aunt says every girl should have a husband—that even the unpleasant ones are useful to keep off undesirable men from a poor girl."

The blonde's face softened as it had not done before for a long while; her eyes seemed to grow deeper, and she laughed a low, merry laugh. "Your aunt has queer ideas of matrimony," she said, "but I am not sure she is altogether wrong." Then she looked away to where the sun was setting in a saffron cloud. The river was golden, and on the side of the hill the blue daisies bloomed on the graves of the forgotten dead, who, perhaps, on some bygone day had had their chance and missed it, too. Well, she would not miss her again, and then, moved by a sudden impulse, she stooped and kissed the brown cheek of the girl, and Charline knew that she kissed her because of the dream that was given back to her again.

"I am going to be married, too, next month—I think," the blonde woman said, softly, as she plucked a spray of cedar and pinned it in the soft fur at her throat. "I had a letter from Dr. Roberts yesterday, and I am going to answer it to-night. I will tell him your news."

With a smile she went away down the hillside, tall and graceful, to the happy life that lay before her, and Charline sat with wide, open eyes, the color fading from her brown cheeks.

Down in the valley between the hills a negro went homeward along the Red river road, singing some wild love song of his race. The cedar birds twittered sleepily overhead, and the light faded from the skies as night fell on the hills.—N. O. Times Democrat.

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TIME TABLE.  
IN EFFECT JULY 27, 1902.

EAST BOUND.  
Lv Louisville 8:30am 8:00pm  
Ar Lexington 11:00am 8:40pm  
Lv Lexington 11:20am 8:45pm 8:15am 5:00pm  
Ar Winchester 11:40am 9:10pm 8:35am 5:20pm  
Ar Mt. Sterling 12:25pm 9:45pm 9:25am 7:05pm  
Ar Washington 5:20am 3:30pm  
Ar Philadelphia 8:50am 7:07pm  
Ar New York 11:15am 9:15pm

WEST BOUND.  
Ar Winchester 7:05am 4:35pm 6:22am 2:40pm  
Ar Lexington 7:45am 5:10pm 7:00am 3:30pm  
Ar Philadelphia 9:05am 6:14pm  
Ar Shelbyville 10:01am 7:00pm  
Ar Louisville 10:30am 8:00pm

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From Lexington—5:11 am; 7:45 am; 9:55 pm; 6:10 pm.  
From Richmond—5:05 am; 7:40 am; 9:15 pm.  
From Maysville—7:45 am; 9:15 pm.

Departure of Trains from Paris:

To Cincinnati—5:15 am; 7:51 am; 9:55 pm.  
To Lexington—7:00 am; 11:05 am; 9:40 pm; 9:40 pm.  
To Richmond—11:10 am; 5:53 pm; 9:55 pm.  
To Maysville—7:00 am; 9:00 pm.

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